

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FEA-01 ACDA-07 AGR-05 AID-05 CEA-01

CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00 CIEP-01 COME-00 DLOS-06 DODE-00

DOT-00 EB-07 EPA-01 ERDA-05 FMC-01 TRSE-00 H-02

INR-07 INT-05 IO-13 JUSE-00 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

NSF-01 OES-06 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAL-01 /127 W

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R 281720Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5997

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 15468

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: EEC, PLOS, EFIS, UK

SUBJECT: MORE BRITISH REACTION TO EC COMMISSION

FISHERIES PROPOSALS

REF: LONDON 15269

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1. MICHAEL BUTLER, WHO HAS JUST BEEN PROMOTED TO

DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY RESPONSIBLE FOR ECONOMIC MATTERS WITHIN THE FCO (AND WHO WAS PREVIOUSLY IN CHARGE OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION QUESTIONS) HAS VOLUNTEERED A GLOOMY PREDICTION THAT BRITISH DISSATISFACTION OVER THE EC COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS FOR THE EC COMMON FISHERIES POLICY WILL LEAD TO AN EXPLOSION THAT MAY DOMINATE THE INSTITUTIONAL LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY DURING THE FIRST HALF OF 1976 -- THE SIX MONTHS IN WHICH THE UK WILL HOLD THE EC PRESIDENCY.

2. IN A CONVERSATION WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS ON SEPT. 28, BUTLER DESCRIBED THE LATEST COMMISSION PROPOSALS AS WORSE THAN EARLIER DRAFTS, DESPITE A BRITISH EFFORT IN THE EARLY SUMMER TO WIN UNDERSTANDING FOR ITS POSITION FROM OTHER MEMBER STATES. INDEED, THE CONTINENTAL MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION, IN HIS VIEW, DISPLAY AN ALMOST TOTAL LACK OF COMPREHENSION OF HOW THE BRITISH FEEL AND UNDER WHAT POLITICAL PRESSURES THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IS LABORING. INSTEAD THEY STICK LEGALISTICALLY TO A POLICY RAMMED THROUGH AT FRENCH INSTANCE IMMEDIATELY BEFORE BRITISH ENTRY, A POLICY WHICH IS UNACCEPTABLE TO THE UK.

3. BUTLER SAID THAT SERIOUS- HIGH LEVEL ATTENTION WAS BEING GIVEN IN THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AS TO HOW THE UK COULD USE LEVERAGE IN OTHER AREAS TO GET ITS WAY ON FISHERIES. FOR EXAMPLE, THE UK MIGHT BLOCK THE ANNUAL CAP PRICE-SETTING EXERCISE. AS AN OLD EUROPEAN HAND, HE REGRETTED THIS LINE OF THOUGHT -- BUT FELT THE DOMESTIC POLITICS OF THE ISSUE MADE IT UNDERSTANDABLE.

4. THERE IS, BUTLER ALLOWED, A POSSIBILITY THAT BY JANUARY THE COMMISSION PROPOSALS CAN BE SUFFICIENTLY IMPROVED TO REDUCE BRITISH WRATH. SUCH IMPROVEMENTS MIGHT HAVE TO DO WITH QUOTAS AND WITH THE QUESTION OF EXCLUDING THIRD COUNTRY (ESPECIALLY RUSSIAN) VESSELS. BUT, ON THE BASIS OF HIS EXPERIENCE OF COMMUNITY PROCESSES, BUTLER WAS PESSIMISTIC THAT SUCH IMPROVEMENTS WERE LIKELY IN THE SHORT PERIOD REMAINING

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BEFORE BRITISH ASSUMPTION OF THE PRESIDENCY.

5. BUTLER MADE A POINT OF ASKING THAT WHAT HE SAID

ON THIS ISSUE NOT RPT NOT BE CONVEYED TO OTHER EC MEMBER STATES. WE PRESUME HIS REQUEST APPLIES ALSO TO THE COMMISSION.

ARMSTRONG

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